

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 08716 220806Z

21

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TAGS: ELAB ET

SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN LABOR SCENE

1. SUMMARY: ETHIOPIAN DEL RETURNED FROM ILO CONFERENCE IN GENEVA, SOMEWHAT BRUISED BY THE EXPERIENCE, TO FIND LOCAL SCENE QUIET BUT MUCH WORK TO DO. GOVT LABOR OFFICIALS ARE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO COMPLETE NEW LABOR LAW WHICH APPARENTLY DIRG WANTS PROMULGATED IN NEAR FUTURE. FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS OF ETHIOPIA (FEE) HAS BEEN FURTHER

STIPPED OF MEMBERS BY CONTINUED QUIET NATIONALIZATIONS, AND ITS SURVIVAL

AS VIABLE LABOR MARKET INSTITUTION IS IN GRAVE DOUBT. PROVISIONAL WORKERS' COMMITTEE (PWC) OF CELU IS SUFFERING INTERNAL STRAINS AND RIVALRIES BUT SEEMS TO BE MAKING SOME PROGRESS TOWARD ITS STATED OBJECTIVE OF REESTABLISHING CELU HQ'S AS GENUINE NATIONAL CENTER FOR AFFILIATED UNIONS AND WORKERS.

2. CHIEF LABOR COMMISSIONER TEFERRA CHARACTERIZED RECENT ILO CONF AS MOT DIFFICULT ETHIOPIAN DELS HAD EVER EXPERIENCED. ARAB REPS WERE DESCRIBED AS VERY AGGRESSIVE IN THEIR CRITICISM OF ETHIOPIAN HANDLING OF ERITREAN SITUATION AND IN

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 08716 220806Z

INSISTENCE THAT BASIC ISSUE IS "ARAB-MOSLEM LIBERATION."

ETHIOPIANS WERE EMBARRASSED BY CHALLENGE TO WORKERS' DELEGATE CREDENTIALS, BY CRITICISMS OF CLOSURE OF CELU IN MAY AND OF MANNER SELECTION PWC, AND BY REELECTION OF IMPRISONED CELU LEADER BEYENE AS DEPUTY WORKERS' MEMBER OF ILO GOVERNING BODY. TEFERRA SAID ICFTU REPS, PARTICULARLY PLANT OF UK, GAVE HIS GROUP HARD TIME. US TRADE UNION REPS BROWN, O'FARRELL AND FUNK, HE NOTED, WERE NATURALLY INCENSED BY "ATROCIOUS LANGUAGE" IN PWC-CELU RESOLUTION ON AFL-CIO BUT WERE "MORE UNDERSTANDING" OF ETHIOPIAN DELS PROBLEMS. TEFERRA ALSO EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN ABOUT US POSITION IN ILO AND STATUS US CONTRIBUTIONS AND REQUESTED TO BE KEPT INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS.

3. OFFICIALS IN LABOR DEPT OF MINISTRY OF NATL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ARE IMMERSED IN THRASHING OUT FINAL DETAILS OF NEW LABOR LAW. REPORTEDLY CELU, FEE AND VARIOUS STATE-OWNED CORPS HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONSULTED, CIVILIAN ADVISORY BODY HAS DELIBERATED ON MEASURE AND DIRG WANTS LAW PROMULGATED SOON. MAIN FEATURES SAID TO INCLUDE (A) LEGAL BASIS FOR "THREE TIER" LABOR ORGANIZATION (IE, LOCAL SHOP UNIONS, NATIONAL FEDERATIONS OF LOCALS ON INDUSTRIAL LINES, AND CONFEDERATION OAS NATIONAL CENTER), (B) UNIVERSAL DUES CHECK-OFF, (C) ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT LABOR COURT, AND (D) FORMATION WORKERS COMMITTEES TO HANDLE GRIEVANCES AND PROVIDE CHANNEL FOR WORKERS' REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT. TEFERRA EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT AS YET NO PROVISION MADE FOR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND HE ANXIOUS TO PRESERVE TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE NO MATTER HOW WEAK EMPLOYER SEGMENT MIGHT BE AT OUTSET.

4. EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION IS IN DISARRAY. NATIONALIZATIONS, WHICH HAVE ALREADY STRIPPED AWAY MANY PROMINENT NUMBERS, CONTINUE TO REDUCE SPHERE OF ORGANIZATION'S FUNCTION. REMAINING MEMBERS (MOSTLY SMALL ENTERPRISES, IMPORT-EXPORT FIRMS, CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES AND INDUSTRIES IN WHICH GOVT HAS TAKEN MAJOR FINANCIAL INTEREST BUT NOT ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP), TURN MORE TO MILITARY WITH THEIR PROBLEMS

AND SHOW LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN INCREASING THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FEE IN ORDER KEEP IT ALIVE. MICHAEL SEYOUM, WHO LEADES FEE STAFF NOW THAT CAPT ABEBE HAS LEFT FOR NEW JOB WITH ILO IN GENEVA, REMARKED TO LABATT THAT EXISTING RESERVES PLUS MODEST DUES RECEIPTS WILL ENABLE

FEE MAINTAIN TWO-MAN OFFICE IN ADDIS AND ONE-MAN OFFICE IN ASMARA FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ADDIS 08716 220806Z

ONE MORE YEAR. AFTER THAT, HE DOUBTFUL FEE CAN SURVIVE.

5. PROVISIONAL WORKERS' COMMITTEE (PWC) OF CELU GIVES APPEARANCE OF WORKING SMOOTHLY. HOWEVER, WITH OBJECTIVE OF OUSTING FORMER CELU LEADERS ALEM AND TESFA FULLY ACCOMPLISHED, UNITY OF NEW LEADERSHIP GROUP IS BEING STRAINED SOMEWHAT BY VYING FOR POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE AND POWER. RUMORS INDICATE THAT KIFLY TADESSE AND YILMA TIRUNEH ARE CHALLENGING PREDOMINANT POSITION HELD BY GIRMACHEW LEMMA AMONG

"TECHNICAL ADVISORS" ON CELU STAFF, THAT GETACHEW AMARE, PWC TREASURER,

FEELS INFLUENCE OF CELU STAFFERS ON DECISION MAKING IS TOO STRONG, AND THAT MARKOS HAGOS, PWC CHAIRMAN, IS ASSERTING HIS POSITION AS PWC CHAIRMAN IN WHAT MAY DEVELOP INTO POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN MARKOS AND GETACHEW. TESSEMA DRESSA, PWC SEC GEN, WAS INITIALLY PUSHED COMPLETELY INTO BACKGROUND BY GETACHEW, BUT MARKOS SAID TO BE SUPPORTING HIM TO PLAY HIS PROPOER ROLE IN PWC. HOWEVER, REALIPIES OF SITUATION AT PRESENT TEND MORE TO HOLD THIS GROUP TOGETHER THAN TO SEPARATE IT, ESPECIALLY AS PWC MANDATE LASTS MAXIMUM OF THREE MONTHS, AND NEW CELU LEADERSHIP MUST EXPECT CHALLENGES IN CELU GEN ASSY EXPECTED CONVENE IN SEPT.

6. MARKOS TOLD LABATT THAT MAJOR EFFORT AT PRESENT IS TO REESTABLISH CELU HQ'S AS GENUINE NATIONAL CENTER FOR AFFILIATED UNIONS AND WORKERS IN GENERAL. LEADERSHIP OF ALEM AND TESFA, HE ASSERTED, HAD FAILED TO KEEP NECESSARY LINKS ALIVE AND LEFT CELU DISJOINTED. HE ADMITTED GREAT DIFFICULTY IN COLLECTING PER CAPITA DUES FROM AFFILIATES, BUT MAINTAINED THIS WAS LEGACY NEW PWC HAD INHERITED FROM FORMER LEADERSHIP. TO RECITIFY SITUATION SEMINARS ARE EING HELD TO EXPLAIN NEW POLICIES AND TO RECAPTURE SPIRIT WHICH FOLLOWED IN WAKE OF MAR 74 GENERAL STRIKE. IN THSE DISCUSSION PARTICULAR STRESS IS BEING GIVEN TO PROGRAM TO CREATE 20 NATIONAL UNIONS ON INDUSTRIAL LINES TO REPLACE MULTIPLICITY OF SMALL SHOP UNIONS. THIS PROGRAM IS POPULAR AMONG WORKERS, HE NOTED, AND WORK TOWARD IT BRINGS PWC OFFICERS AND STAFF INTO CONSTRUCTIVE CONSULTATION WITH AFFILIATES.

7. LOOKING TO CELU FUTURE, MARKOS FORESAW THREE IMPORTANT STEPS: (A) PROMULGATION OF NEW LABOR LAW; (B) DRAFTING OF NEW CELU CONSTITUTION IN LINE WITH (A); AND (C) HOLDING OF ASSEMBLY TO ADOPT CONSTITUTION AND ELECT NEW COMMITTEE AND OFFCERS.

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PAGE 04 ADDIS 08716 220806Z

8. WHILE PWC THUS ENDEAVORING GATHER REINS OF POWER AND ASSERT ITS AUTHORITY, NEW OPPOSITION GROUP APPEARS TO BE FORMING AROUND TSEGAYE ABEBE. MANY TRADE UNIONISTS WERE DISSATISFIED WITH MANNER IN WHICH JUNE 1-4 ASSEMBLY CONDUCTED AND DISAPPROVE OF RADICAL FEATURES OF RESOLUTION PASSED BY THAT ASEMBLY. PERSONAL ANTIPATHIES TO NEW LEADERS IN PWC NO DOUBT ALSO PLAY SIGNIFICANT PART. HOWEVER, SUCH OPPOSITION REMAINS UNORGANIZED AND POSSESSES MEAGER RESOURCES.  
HUMMEL

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